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THE CASCADE

BY LOUISE MORGAN SILL

For centuries, gray olden centuries have I flung
Myself o'er this abyss, and rung
 The challenge of my music on the rocks.
Ancient I am, yet can withstand the shocks
Of seasons bitter and sweet, and the corroding years
 Pass over me as harmless as the clouds
That add their passing tears
 To my swift torrent. And though I am so old,
So old that trees of mighty strength have died,
 And warm-blooded men grown cold,
Father and son and grandchild, and the bride,
The wife, the widow; conquerors, kings, and slaves;
 Dynasties and the prophecies of sages,
 Tomes of philosophers—the toil of ages—
Brimming with man's insistent thought that rolls
 From cycle to cycle, changing as the year,
 Fashioning life anew as needs appear,—
Yea, though all these have passed,
Yet I through age-long watches keep my tryst
With God's command, and down the mountain's height
My flood of foam and crystal liquid cast.

For I am old and sure; I know my way
Through Alpine wildernesses where no foot
 May tread, nor chamois dare a rushing leap.
I know not rest, nor the strong lure of sleep,
But here eternally I charm the stars,
 And in my caverns deep
Sing madrigals that none may hear and live,
For who would follow my mid-earthly flight
Must die in an unending night.

I am the testimony of the Law.

I witness Things unseen.

Who looks on me must know that God hath been,
And is, and ever shall be. For I saw

The wonders of great deeds . . . and man must feel,
When over me he leans, that influence,
Secret and holy; and, when he goes hence

Back to the world of men whose trouble steals
His peace away, his thoughts will turn to me

In my green solitude, and soul to soul
We shall commune till Spirit, pure and free,

Shall have its way his sorrow to console—

As if a Hand, by father-feeling led,
Had drifted down from Heaven upon his head.

LOUISE MORGAN SILL.